

Megaprograms Diversity and Inclusive Contracting

Quarterly Report: October–December 2020

2020 year in review: Meeting unprecedented challenges



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2020 was a tough year for us all. For the Washington State Department of Transportation, the coronavirus pandemic caused an 11-week pause in construction while we set new protocols to keep workers safe. The pandemic also triggered a big drop in expected transportation revenues. We continue working with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to determine how this evolving situation may affect WSDOT's budget. Depending on what state lawmakers decide in their 2021 legislative session, we could see changes in some project schedules and completion dates.

Despite all the challenges we faced in 2020, a number of good things happened too. In this newsletter, we're sharing some megaprogram highlights from the past year, spotlighting a few WSDOT subcontractors, and peeking at potential contracting opportunities in 2021 for minority, small, veteran and woman-owned business enterprises (MSVWBEs). I hope you'll read on to learn more. Here's to good health and a brighter 2021 for you and yours!

Puget Sound Gateway Program: The Gateway program moved from planning and design to construction in 2020! We broke ground in February 2020 on the SR 167 70th Avenue East Bridge Project – the program's first construction project. And in December, we opened bids for a new SR 509/I-5 to 24th Avenue South expressway. Our Atkinson design-build team, managing both projects, made solid progress both in the field and in its MSVWBE inclusion efforts. To date, Atkinson has enlisted 30 firms in key work areas. Our first-ever virtual proposers meeting and DBE networking sessions drew over 100 contractors and consultants, including more than 40 DBE firms.

Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV) Replacement Program: We completed the decommissioning of Seattle's Battery Street Tunnel in December 2020 – one year after finishing the demolition of the old SR 99 viaduct. The AWV Program is well on the way to completing the restoration of Seattle's north surface streets; we expect substantial completion of this northside project by May 2021. Strong use of minority and small-business enterprises by the design-builder, Kiewit, should allow us to exceed our combined MSVWBE goal of 26%!

I-405 / SR 167 Program: Our design-builder on the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Project, Flatiron-Lane Joint Venture, progressed from design elements to the start of construction in 2020. Work focused on the East-side Rail Corridor Trail, drainage work in the May Creek area, early fish-passage work, and earth work at the NE 44th Street/ Lake Washington Blvd interchange. Also, we issued a design-build RFQ in September for the I-405, Northeast 132nd Street Interchange Project, and held an MSVWBE informational meeting that same month. The megaprogram plans to release the request for proposals in February 2021.

SR 520 Montlake Project: Following last spring's pandemic-caused halt in construction, our Montlake Project contractor, Graham, made significant headway. By year's end, we'd built a substantial portion of the support walls needed for a new freeway lid in Montlake, and removed about half of the old, structurally vulnerable eastbound bridge over Union Bay. Like our other megaprograms, the SR 520 Program regularly connects with organizations and individual firms within the MSVWBE community. Last fall, for example, we held a virtual outreach session on future subcontracting opportunities on the Montlake Project. More than 60 MSVWBE business representatives attended the event.

Reign City Services: The foundation for solid highway structures



A Reign City crew at work on a Puget Sound Gateway Program site.

When the Puget Sound Gateway Program broke ground in early 2020 on the SR 167/70th Avenue East Bridge Project, one of the first subcontractors on the job was Reign City Services. This minority-owned small business, co-owned by Mike Schirmer and Faamanu Segi, performs a variety of work, including potholing, sewer and water main installation, sidewalk construction, and hauling. Mike and Faamanu started Reign City about two years ago after establishing themselves in the industry with other construction companies. They currently have a crew of five in the field.

On the 70th Avenue Bridge Project, their first for WSDOT, Reign City provided potholing services to ensure no utility conflicts with I-5 traffic signs, and Vactoring services to support pile placement for bridge abutments. You won't see Reign City's

imprint in the final product, but their underground work is critical to ensuring that the project's structures stand on a strong foundation.

Schirmer has had a positive experience as his DBE firm works with Atkinson Construction, the project's prime contractor. "Working with Atkinson has been great," he said. "They knew we were a small company and went out of their way to use us. They took a chance on us over more established firms and we made the most of it." Mike looks forward to more work on upcoming Gateway Program projects, and hopes that prime contractors will view Reign City as a viable choice for a variety of underground services.

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Magna Services: Leaving a trail of happy customers



Todd Pita
Owner

The Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program (AWV) places a high priority on controlling groundwater runoff to protect local waterways. To accomplish that goal, the program's prime contractor, Kiewit, turned to Magna Services, a minority-owned firm. "We assisted Kiewit by controlling groundwater runoff and performing erosion-control activities," explained Todd Pita, Magna Services' owner. Pita, a self-described "dewatering specialist," said Magna Services pumps out and controls groundwater so builders and installers have a dry work environment.

The best part of the AWV work, he said, was "...being a part of a big project that's reshaping the whole waterfront of Seattle. That's a monumental thing to be part of. Taking down the viaduct and then redoing the waterfront. It's quieter now without the viaduct. It's a whole different place and a lot nicer."

For those wanting to work with WSDOT, his advice is, "Be proactive and reach out. Go to the 'meet and greets.' It's not so much who you know as knowing the process and writing a good proposal. And be sure to monitor the bidding websites."

Todd Pita says he worked for a lot of different contractors before starting his own company, and economic slow-downs regularly occurred. So during one of the slowdowns, he decided to strike out on his own. That was in 2016. Pita says he'd next like to be a part of the I-405 corridor project. "We try to leave a trail of happy customers. Satisfied customers come back and work with you again. Reputation is everything."

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Exeltech: Modernizing I-405/SR 167 while protecting our environment



Santosh Kuruvilla
Owner

Exeltech employees like to say, “We are all in this together.” That worldview is something they valued long before COVID-19 hit. Now, though, it is true more than ever. Exeltech owner Santosh Kuruvilla’s philosophy is that “People, not companies, deliver successful projects. To that end, WSDOT has done a tremendous job in its program. By including firms like ours, we can highlight our people who are making a meaningful contribution on projects.”

His 30-year-old consulting firm is a subcontractor on WSDOT’s I-405/SR 167 Renton-to-Bellevue Program. The Exeltech team works remotely but is getting the job done on time and helping to give the corridor a “facelift.” New signs and toll gantries are just part of the project.

Jasmine Aryana, an Exeltech landscape architect and project manager, designs restoration plans for mitigating construction effects to roadways, wetlands, trails, and parks. “This is not just a transportation infrastructure project,” she said. “It also involves improving and restoring the environmental habitat, positively affecting the people and our region by creating additional green spaces.” Jasmine is an expert in wetland science and management. “This is a regional project that is greening the transportation corridor and restoring urban creeks, wetlands and riparian areas. ... It’s not just building structures everywhere.”

Exeltech, which provides planning, permitting, design, and construction management services, is most proud of its cost-saving designs, meeting deadlines, and collaborating with multiple agencies simultaneously. To work with WSDOT, this minority-owned business suggests flexibility. “Be open to working in different roles where you are able to lead various aspects of the project as well as support the larger team,” Kuruvilla said.

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1 Alliance Geomatics: At the forefront of technology



Jason Nakamura
President/GM

Jason Nakamura is a self-described techie — and not just for fun. Technology is an integral part of his surveying and mapping business, 1 Alliance Geomatics, which specializes in design-build projects. On the SR 520 Montlake Project, Graham, the prime contractor, tasked 1 Alliance surveyors with key engineering design surveys and construction staking so contractors know where to build. “Design-build is the best of both worlds for us because we can help support the project all the way through design to construction,” Nakamura said. “Instead of just getting a surveyor for the design and then getting a separate surveyor for construction staking, we can do both. We know the project from beginning to end.”

Nakamura, 1 Alliance Geomatics’ president, says his interest in the latest gadgets has paid off. “Being on top of technology has helped us a lot. Our tools are the latest. We use laser scanners and can even scan areas remotely. We come up with new and efficient ways to help our clients get solutions.” When COVID-19 stymied some other companies’ communication, “We were already fluent in virtual meetings. There was no learning curve. It was scary at the beginning, but we did not have to lay off anyone.”

Nakamura believes the Montlake Project has grown his minority-owned business by keeping 1 Alliance “...visible to design-build contractors and introducing us to other opportunities.” He says WSDOT has helped his 8-year-old company immensely. He advises anyone who wants to work with WSDOT “to know the client, know what they expect, and when you are given the chance, you have to perform. I don’t want to start anything unless I know I can do it.”

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WSDOT contracting opportunities in 2021 and beyond

Puget Sound Gateway: The DBE community will have major contracting opportunities in 2021 on the largest WSDOT project to go to bid since the pandemic hit early last year. We intend to give Notice to Proceed in February to the SR 509/I-5 to 24th Avenue South New Expressway design-build contractor, Guy F. Atkinson Construction. We selected Atkinson in December and will soon initiate formal outreach activities focused on adding certified underutilized disadvantaged businesses (UDBE) and federal small businesses (FSBE) to their team, which already has committed to 20 firms. The contract includes 8% design participation requirements for both UDBE and FSBE. DBE firms interested in contracting opportunities should contact Atkinson's DBE Program Administrator, Geoff Shook, at 425-255-7325 and geoff.shook@atkn.com.

AWV: We plan a February advertisement for bids for the AWV program's final project, the South Access Connection, with work beginning this summer. This design-bid-build project will complete street restoration work and construct a parking garage in the vicinity of the SR 99 Tunnel South Operations Building. We also will wrap up street restoration work at the SR 99 Tunnel North Operations Building.

I-405/SR 167: The I-405/SR 167 Megaprogram will continue to work with Flatiron on MSVWBE contract opportunities on the Renton to Bellevue Project, which should reach substantial completion in summer 2024. Interested firms should contact George Frost: george@gwfrost.com, or 206-207-7475. The megaprogram plans to release the RFP for the Northeast 132nd Interchange Project in February 2021. We will move toward construction later this year. Firms interested in this project should contact Dawn McIntosh: mcintod@wsdot.wa.gov, or 206-909-3655.

SR 520: Montlake Project: Graham continues its work building this project, scheduled for completion in 2023. Subcontracting opportunities will continue as construction proceeds. Interested firms should contact Tom McMillan at tom.mcmillan@grahamus.com or 425-410-0993, or Darling Nava at darling@zanninc.com or 813-947-8586.

SR 520/I-5 Express Lanes Connection Project: We plan to advertise a design-bid-build contract in March for this 3-year project, and start construction this spring or summer.

Number of MSVWBE and DBE firms for each Megaprogram

All programs are working to meet their voluntary and mandatory goals for MSVWBE and DBE participation. The chart at right shows the total number of current and past MSVWBE and DBE firms contracted on each program. Please refer to the individual program reports for more information about MSVWBE and DBE participation.

Puget Sound Gateway Program

24 A&E
31 Construction

55

AWV Replacement Program

A&E
225 Construction

225

I-405/SR 167 Program

14 A&E
56 Construction

70

SR 520 Program

26 A&E
107 Construction
(Two firms worked in both design and construction)

131

Title VI notice to public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.

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